

Section 7015
(October 2002)

7015	Communications
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Communications is a critical element for achieving success in any firefighting operation. It is the vital link used to connect all the components of the fire organization together and provides for information and instructions to be distributed throughout the chain of command. Without adequate communications safety will be compromised, fire organization will be chaotic, desired objectives will not be met, and the entire incident has a high probability of failure.

METHODS OF COMMUNICATIONS**7015.1****(October 2002)**

1. Face to Face (Verbal)
 - The best method of communication
 - Especially useful during initial attack (becomes more difficult as incident size increases)
 - Allows for questions, reactions, and evaluation of body language
 - Provides for free flow of information and permits the exchange of drawings and maps.
 - Limited to range of personal contact
 - Common locations for face-to-face communications are command post, fireline, staging areas, and briefings.
2. Written Communications
 - Provides hard copy for continuous reference
 - Commonly used methods of written communication are:
 - . Incident Action Plans
 - . ICS Form 201
 - . Departmental SOP's (Standard Operating Procedures)
 - . Departmental Policy Manuals
 - . Temporary Directives
 - Absolutely required as the incident grows into extended and major attack.
3. Radio
 - The most common form of incident communications
 - Provides more information to more people and places quickly
 - Provides information to remote areas
 - Can incorporate advanced technologies such as cellular phones and satellite links.
 - Successful radio communications requires strong **radio procedures**, a **Communications Plan** with identified radio nets and frequencies, and strict **radio discipline**.

RADIO NETS

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1. Command Net – Connects the Incident Commander with the ECC and Key players on the incident down to the Division Supervisor level
2. Tactical Net – Are assigned to specific units and functions to allow for on-scene communications.
3. Air to Air (Air Tactics) - A tactical net used by the Air Tactical Group Supervisor to coordinate assigned rotary and fixed wing aircraft over the incident.
4. Air to Ground – Usually used to coordinate ground units with specific aircraft needs. Often restricted to Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief and helitack use.
5. Support Net – Established on major incidents for use inside the incident base and other facilities.
6. Travel Net – A USFS frequency shared with CDF designated for use by resources enroute to and returning from an incident outside their home unit or forest.

(Reference: [Radio Nets 7097.5.1](#))

RADIO DISCIPLINE

(October 2002)

7015.3

- Keep radio traffic to a minimum
- Think what you want to say before keying the mike
- Use short, concise messages (clear text)
- Scan only frequencies that are necessary to the incident
- Monitor important frequencies constantly

References: [CDF 8000 Manual](#)
[ICS 100 & 200 Training Manual](#)

(see next section)

(see HB Table of Contents)

(see [Forms](#) or [Forms Samples](#))